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RESOLUTION 1261 (1999)

Adopted by the Security Council at its 4037th meeting,
on 25 August 1999

The Security Council,

Recalling the statements of its President of 29 June 1998 (S/PRST/1998/18), 12 February 1999 (S/PRST/1999/6) and 8 July 1999 (S/PRST/1999/21),

Noting recent efforts to bring to an end the use of children as soldiers in violation of international law, in International Labour Organization Convention No. 182 on the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour which prohibits forced or compulsory labour, including the forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict, and in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in which conscripting or enlisting children under the age of fifteen into national armed forces or using them to participate actively in hostilities is characterized as a war crime,

1. Expresses its grave concern at the harmful and widespread impact of armed conflict on children and the long-term consequences this has for durable peace, security and development;

2. Strongly condemns the targeting of children in situations of armed conflict, including killing and maiming, sexual violence, abduction and forced displacement, recruitment and use of children in armed conflict in violation of international law, and attacks on objects protected under international law, including places that usually have a significant presence of children such as schools and hospitals, and calls on all parties concerned to put an end to such practices;

3. Calls upon all parties concerned to comply strictly with their obligations under international law, in particular the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and the obligations applicable to them under the Additional Protocols thereto of 1977 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989, and stresses the responsibility of all States to bring an end to impunity and their obligation to prosecute those responsible for grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949;

4. Expresses its support for the ongoing work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), other parts of the United Nations system and other relevant international organizations dealing with children affected by armed conflict, and requests the Secretary-General to continue to develop coordination and coherence among them;

5. Welcomes and encourages efforts by all relevant actors at the national and international level to develop more coherent and effective approaches to the issue of children and armed conflict;

6. Supports the work of the open-ended inter-sessional working group of the Commission on Human Rights on a draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and expresses the hope that it will make further progress with a view to finalizing its work;

7. Urges all parties to armed conflicts to ensure that the protection, welfare and rights of children are taken into account during peace negotiations and throughout the process of consolidating peace in the aftermath of conflict;

8. Calls upon parties to armed conflicts to undertake feasible measures during armed conflicts to minimize the harm suffered by children, such as "days of tranquillity" to allow the delivery of basic necessary services, and further calls upon all parties to armed conflicts to promote, implement and respect such measures;

9. Urges all parties to armed conflicts to abide by concrete commitments made to ensure the protection of children in situations of armed conflict;

10. Urges all parties to armed conflicts to take special measures to protect children, in particular girls, from rape and other forms of sexual abuse and gender-based violence in situations of armed conflict and to take into account the special needs of the girl child throughout armed conflicts and their aftermath, including in the delivery of humanitarian assistance;

11. Calls upon all parties to armed conflicts to ensure the full, safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel and the delivery of humanitarian assistance to all children affected by armed conflict;

12. Underscores the importance of the safety, security and freedom of movement of United Nations and associated personnel to the alleviation of the impact of armed conflict on children, and urges all parties to armed conflicts to respect fully the status of United Nations and associated personnel;

13. Urges States and all relevant parts of the United Nations system to intensify their efforts to ensure an end to the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict in violation of international law through political and other efforts, including promotion of the availability of alternatives for children to their participation in armed conflict;

14. Recognizes the deleterious impact of the proliferation of arms, in particular small arms, on the security of civilians, including refugees and other vulnerable populations, particularly children, and, in this regard, it recalls resolution 1209 (1998) of 19 November 1998 which, inter alia, stresses the importance of all Member States, and in particular States involved in manufacturing and marketing of weapons, restricting arms transfers which could provoke or prolong armed conflicts or aggravate existing tensions or armed conflicts, and which urged international collaboration in combating illegal arms flows;

15. Urges States and the United Nations system to facilitate the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration of children used as soldiers in violation of international law, and calls upon, in particular, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, UNICEF, UNHCR and other relevant agencies of the United Nations system to intensify their efforts in this regard;

16. Undertakes, when taking action aimed at promoting peace and security, to give special attention to the protection, welfare and rights of children, and requests the Secretary-General to include in his reports recommendations in this regard;

17. Reaffirms its readiness when dealing with situations of armed conflict:

(a) to continue to support the provision of humanitarian assistance to civilian populations in distress, taking into account the particular needs of children including, inter alia, the provision and rehabilitation of medical and educational services to respond to the needs of children, the rehabilitation of children who have been maimed or psychologically traumatized, and child-focused mine clearance and mine-awareness programmes;

(b) to continue to support the protection of displaced children including their resettlement by UNHCR and others as appropriate; and

(c) whenever adopting measures under Article 41 of the Charter of the United Nations, to give consideration to their impact on children, in order to consider appropriate humanitarian exemptions;

18. Reaffirms also its readiness to consider appropriate responses whenever buildings or sites which usually have a significant presence of children are specifically targeted in situations of armed conflict, in violation of international law;

19. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure that personnel involved in United Nations peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building activities have appropriate training on the protection, rights and welfare of children, and urges States and relevant international and regional organizations to ensure that appropriate training is included in their programmes for personnel involved in similar activities;

20. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the Council by 31 July 2000, a report on the implementation of this resolution, consulting all relevant parts of the United Nations system and taking into account other relevant work;

21. Decides to remain actively seized of the matter.